

In These Troubled Times

September 11th was one of the greatest tragedies for America, and one we will all remember for the remainder of our lives. We'll know where we were, and what we were doing at the time we heard the news.

In times like these, Americans always have banded together, united under one flag! We see this now in our neighborhoods, on the roadways — the U.S. flag is seen everywhere.

Seeing the flag flying proudly reminds me of Navy basic training. So much drilling and marching, mostly in the rain. Long hours in classrooms, learning knots and ship nomenclature. Running the obstacle course, learning to stop a wild fire hose, and being closeted with tear gas, just to be sure we trusted our gas masks if they should ever be needed.

Many times late at night you'd hear quiet sobbing from the stress and homesickness. I, myself, wondered several times if I'd made a mistake in volunteering to serve my country. It all seemed so ridiculous and grueling the things we had to do, when others were in cushy civilian jobs.

Then on graduation day, when we marched onto the parade field in front of our families and friends, the Navy band began to play, "She's a Grand Ole Flag". At that moment, they began slowly raising the flag up the flag pole in the center of the field. Every military person present saluted the flag, and civilians put their hands over their hearts. The words of the song ran through my mind, "She's the emblem of the land I love, the home of the free and the brave...". The flag stands for freedom and all of the lives lost over the many years and many wars to give us this freedom today.

The employees of Lewis, Longman and Walker feel deeply about the lives lost recently, giving support individually to those left behind through local groups and charities. We also salute our men and women in uniform, who will answer this challenge in the name of freedom — our freedom!